NEWS RELEASE

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Joint Statement of Opposition to SB 1 From the Faculty Unions of Ohio's Public Universities

As representatives of organizations committed to protecting the rights of faculty and the integrity of higher education in Ohio, we stand in opposition to SB 1, the "Advance Ohio Higher Education Act."

SB 1 is a slightly revised version of SB 83 from the last General Assembly that remains an example of blatant government overreach and micromanagement of the university. It is state-imposed censorship of what occurs in the university classroom, and will have a chilling effect on academic freedom and freedom of expression. It purports to address the rampant "indoctrination" of students—a claim for which no verifiable evidence has been provided. Ironically, the censorship of certain topics along with the specific requirements of what should be taught is itself the imposition of a single view or ideology, namely, that of the bill's sponsor and co-sponsors.

Although the sponsors of SB1 claim it will encourage diversity, it would have the opposite effect. By restricting offices and scholarships that target particular groups, universities could no longer offer additional support to first generation college students, encourage women in STEM fields, support non-traditional students, historically underrepresented minorities, certain nationalities, people with disabilities, or provide special support for veterans. This would limit the commitment all our institutions should have to ensure all Ohioans have access to our colleges and universities.

SB 1 would radically undermine the collective bargaining rights of faculty unions by restoring the faculty strike ban for full-time faculty members from the original version of SB 83 and prohibiting bargaining regarding faculty evaluations, tenure, and retrenchment (the process for reduction of force). This ban on collective bargaining, combined with an overly broad definition of retrenchment, would leave faculty without job security, and would leave academic freedom unprotected.

Enactment of SB 1 would imperil the retention and recruitment of excellent faculty by essentially eliminating meaningful tenure at Ohio's public institutions of higher education. This will result in faculty seeking positions with more job security—a trend currently occurring since the passage of similar laws in Florida. This loss of intellectual capital can weaken the state's academic and research capabilities, making it challenging to attract future talent.

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